

Trip Report - Pohnpei B September 23-25, 2004

Pohnpei's current FHM program consists of a preliminary survey and inspection with GPS locations and photographs of existing weeds and a public education program.

There are many invasive species which are currently growing along the roadside throughout the island. These include *Chromolaena*, *Merremia*, *Spathodea*, *Clerodendrum quadriloculare* (both species), *Wedelia*, and others. I did not see anything which was limited in distribution at the low elevations. The most appropriate strategy seems to be to keep the worst of these species from spreading uphill and into the intact forest upslope. Pohnpei Forestry should continue surveys of the spread of these species and produce distribution maps before any sort of wholesale roadside spraying approach is adopted.

The biggest problem for forest health and conservation is the clearing of higher elevation forested areas for **sakau**. This is occurring at an unprecedented rate and everyone in conservation is keenly aware of the problem and the probable consequences. We need a strategic plan to reverse this trend and restore areas that have already been cleared. There are many socio-economic and biological aspects of this issue B forestry (invasive species), agriculture (what other crops to grow), economics (how to replace the ready cash that can be obtained by growing and marketing sakau). A group should be convened to determine a comprehensive approach to this problem rather than attacking each little piece. I met with the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy, Stephen A. Druzak. He and the Ambassador (Suzanne Hale) are new but both are aware of and concerned about the issue. The Ambassador was planning to have a series of dinners at her house and get together key individuals interested in various issues to stimulate discussion and hopefully action. This would be a good topic for such a meeting. The Nature Conservancy and several other NGOs are important partners in any efforts as they have staffs located on-island.

Other Issues

Chromolaena B there is a lot of *Chromolaena* on the island and the best hope is to work with Dr. Muniappan of Guam to get insects reared and begin an active release program.

I also met with Konrad Engelberger with SPC. The Pacific Pest List Database (ACCESS) is just coming on line and will be used throughout the Pacific to track the movement of pests B particularly used in quarantine but could have application for forestry. It has trade certification and pest occurrence modules. I believe all of the U.S. affiliated islands will have access to the training and the database and we should support this cooperative effort.

Leadership

Herson will be retiring in 2 years and there is no one near ready to take his place on Pohnpei. They need to start thinking seriously about this issue.

Follow-up

Kosrae requested that I visit and assist them with Forest Health planning as soon as possible. I plan to visit FSM again in February, attend the PIC meeting on Kosrae and work with the staff. At the same time I would like to spend a couple of days in Pohnpei following up on the sakau issue.